

Best of the West

14 Day Self-Drive Tour

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Los Angeles • Palm Springs • Mesa • Grand Canyon • Las Vegas • Death Valley • Yosemite Gateway • San Francisco • Monterey • Ventura • Los Angeles

ITINERARY

Day 1: Los Angeles

Fly to Los Angeles from the UK and on arrival pick up your hire car. Upon check-in, please ask the hotel reception for your ATI Tour documentation pack which will include your tour essentials. **Accommodation stay – 1 night in Los Angeles.**

Day 2: Los Angeles – Palm Springs

Today pick up your rental car and make your way south to Anaheim, Orange County's headquarters for fun. Spend the day surrounded by icons and classic characters at the original Disneyland Park. Visit the nation's oldest theme park, Knott's Berry Farm, filled with old west history, or one of Anaheim's many other fun-filled attractions before continuing east to Palm Springs. This ultimate desert playground nestled at the base of the majestic San Jacinto Mountains offers the perfect blend of outdoor entertainment and casual relaxation. Take time this evening to dine in one of the many excellent restaurants in downtown Palm Springs or escape the heat and ride the aerial tramway high up above the desert floor for panoramic views of the Coachella Valley. **Accommodation stay – 1 night in Palm Springs.** Driving distance 145 miles.

Day 3: Palm Springs – Mesa

Spend the morning lounging by the pool, walking along palm tree lined streets, or exploring countless shops, art galleries and museums before setting out east through the Coachella Valley to Phoenix and Scottsdale, two of Central Arizona's top destinations. With Phoenix's skyscraper-filled skyline complemented by famed Camelback Mountain and Scottsdale's Old West charm, it's guaranteed you'll enjoy this uniquely Southwestern playground. **Accommodation stay – 1 night Mesa.** Driving distance 265 miles.

Day 4: Mesa – Grand Canyon

Today, head north to Grand Canyon National Park, a natural wonder that you simply have to see to believe. Spend the day discovering the distinct South Rim of the Canyon. Stop at one of the numerous overlooks, walk part of the Rim Trail or along the historic Hermit Road, visit a Photo Hot Spot, or climb to the top of a stone Watchtower for panoramic views that extend over 100 miles on clear days. **Accommodation Stay – 1 night in Grand Canyon.** Driving distance 230 miles.

Day 5: Grand Canyon – Las Vegas

Leave the grandeur of the Canyon behind as you head west today through Williams and Kingman, the heart of Historic Route 66 and one of Arizona's hidden treasures, to Hoover Dam. Considered the largest single public works project in the history of the U.S., Hoover Dam straddles the mighty Colorado River, which forms the border between Nevada and Arizona and brings much-needed water and power to the Southwest. Continue to Las Vegas, Nevada, a city that needs no introduction. **Accommodation Stay – 2 nights in Las Vegas.** Driving distance 275 miles.

Day 6: Las Vegas

Enjoy a full day Las Vegas style. Walk the famous Strip lined with mega-resorts and flashing neon lights, place a bet at one of the many casinos, dine at world-class restaurants, catch the latest must-see show, shop designer boutiques, ride a rollercoaster, lay by the pool ... the list goes on. With so much to do, 24 hours in a day hardly seems like enough.

Day 7: Las Vegas – Death Valley

This morning take the opportunity to capture a photograph at the iconic Welcome to Las Vegas sign before your journey takes you west to the lowest elevation in North America, Death Valley National Park. Here, the Mojave is at its most magnificent with geological history on full display in this rugged, severe, sublime section of California. Enhance your desert experience with a stop at Zabriskie Point offering spectacular views of the wildly eroded and vibrantly colored badlands. Don't miss the opportunity this evening to cast your eyes upon the night sky for some of the best stargazing in the world. **Accommodation Stay – 1 night in Death Valley.** Driving distance 140 miles.

Day 8: Death Valley – Yosemite Gateway

This morning, travel north into the High Sierra where Tioga Road, the highest drivable pass in California, leads you into Yosemite National Park. Best known for its impressive waterfalls, grand meadows, and spectacular rock formations, Yosemite was one of the first wilderness parks in the United States. Delve into the depths of the park with a walk to a waterfall, each as distinct as the granite cliffs they dive over, or learn about the wonders of the park during a ranger-guided stroll. Explore a giant sequoia grove and meet the most massive trees on earth, or spend an evening under the stars. With approximately 800 miles of trails, Yosemite is also a great place to hike. **Accommodation Stay – 1 night Yosemite Gateway.** Driving distance 325 miles.

Day 9: Yosemite Gateway – San Francisco

Leave the wonder of Yosemite behind as you journey west through Gold Rush-era attractions, California's State Capital, Sacramento, and on to San Francisco. Considered one the greatest cities in the world for many reasons, San Francisco offers one-of-a-kind sights and something to suit your every need. **Accommodation stay – 1 night in San Francisco.** Driving distance 195 miles.

Day 10: San Francisco – Monterey

This morning, head south to Monterey along Highway 1 which offers breathtaking views of the Pacific coastline. Take in the sights, sounds and smells of Monterey at Old Fisherman's Wharf in downtown. Explore Cannery Row's historic waterfront district, John Steinbeck's inspiration for his novel of the same name. Visit the quaint area of Carmel, and enjoy an exhilarating trip along 17-Mile Drive from Pacific Grove to Pebble Beach. **Accommodation stay – 1 night in Monterey.** Driving distance 130 miles.

Day 11: Monterey - Ventura

Continue south along central California's scenic Pacific Coast Highway. This twisting, cliff-hugging route starts in Monterey and takes you through Big Sur where mountains plunge into the Pacific Ocean. Farther south, the landscape mellows to oak-studded hills as the road passes Hearst Castle and ends in Morro Bay. A short distance inland is the heart of the Central Coast, San Luis Obispo. From here, continue south to Ventura passing through Pismo Beach, inland agricultural valleys of rolling countryside, and Santa Barbara, often described as the American Riviera. Located along the southern-most part of California's Central Coast, Ventura is a classic beach town in a spectacular setting. **Accommodation stay – 1 night in Ventura.** Driving distance 280 miles

Day 12: Ventura – Los Angeles

Today, travel further south through Oxnard, yet another beautiful stretch of coast in Malibu, and the seaside town of Santa Monica. Arrive in Los Angeles with enough time to glimpse some of the glitz and glamour of the City of Angels. Check out the Hollywood Walk of Fame TCL Chinese Theatre, formerly Grauman's Chinese Theatre, the Sunset Strip, Beverly Hills, and Rodeo Drive; some of the best sights Los Angeles has to offer. **Accommodation stay – 1 night in Los Angeles.** Driving distance 75 miles.

Day 13: Depart Los Angeles

Return your hire car to the airport prior to your flight back to the UK (arrive day 14).

This tour is based on a Room only basis

***Denotes local charge** – Optional trips and excursions suggested on the itinerary are bookable and payable locally.

This is a set tour itinerary, if you have booked any pre/post or optional tour arrangements please refer to your separate vouchers and final documents.

All hotels & locations are subject to change based on availability, final hotel list will be confirmed 10 days before departure.

TOUR NOTES

For current departure dates and prices please check our website

Pre/Post Tour information

If you would like to extend your trip or make the tour part of a longer holiday, we can easily add on a pre or post night stays for you. Our Sales Team will work with you to arrange the best connecting flights and book any additional hotel stays. Simply tell us what you'd like and we can arrange it.

Time difference

Eastern Time Zone: GMT -5 hours
Pacific Time Zone: GMT -8 hours
Mountain Time Zone: GMT -7 hours
Central Time Zone: GMT -6 hours

Tour inclusions

- Accommodation listed above
- Welcome phone call from American Tours International on Day 1
- Virgin Holidays branded rucksack with tour documentation and Atlas, please ask when you check in at your first hotel for your 'ATI Pack'
- Beach Blanket
- Starbucks gift card.

Tour exclusions

- All Flights and airport transfers in the UK
- Travel Insurance
- Car hire and insurance unless this has been booked by the sales consultant
- Items of a personal nature such as drinks, laundry, tips & gratuities, video camera fees at monuments
- The required ESTA application
- Anything not detailed on the itinerary.

Dining inclusions

Room Only

Visa requirements

It's mandatory for everyone travelling to or transferring through the US, under the Visa Waiver Program, to obtain approval to travel no later than 72 hours prior to travel by completing an online process ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) scheme. Failure to obtain an ESTA could result in the passenger being denied boarding by the airline.

The cost of an ESTA is currently approx \$14 per person and can be obtained by visiting <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>. Once completed & approved, the ESTA application is valid for two years and allows multiple visits without the need to reapply – simply update your details on the same website.

Alternatively you can apply for your ESTA through our partners CIBT visas who make the process as easy as possible and will apply for the ESTA on your behalf. Contact them on www.cibtvisas.co.uk/virginholidays for more information."

Currency

The official unit of currency in the US is the US dollar. Optional excursions will need to be paid locally by cash to the tour guide. Major credit cards and debit cards will be accepted within the US.

Electricity

If you bring any electrical appliance to the USA, you may need an adaptor to fit the US electrical receptacles. You may also need a converter to change the voltage from 110 volts to 220 volts.

Tipping

Tipping is a big part of the USA's service economy and their taxation system, all visitors should understand that this is a part of the local culture; please see below a list of useful suggestions for tipping:

- Waiters/Waitresses: 15% - 20% for average - good service, more for exceptional service.
- Bartenders: \$1 - \$2 a round -or- 15% to 20% of the tab, with a minimum of 50 cents per soft drink, \$1 per alcoholic drink.
- Room Service: 15% - 20%
- Taxi driver: Varies depending on locality. Assume 15% will be enough; an extra \$1 to \$2 for help with bags.
- Hotel doorman: \$1 per bag for help with luggage; \$1 per person for hailing a cab.

Recommended vaccinations

We advise you to discuss your individual requirements for the USA with your GP at least 6-8 weeks prior to travel.